# The Black Cat

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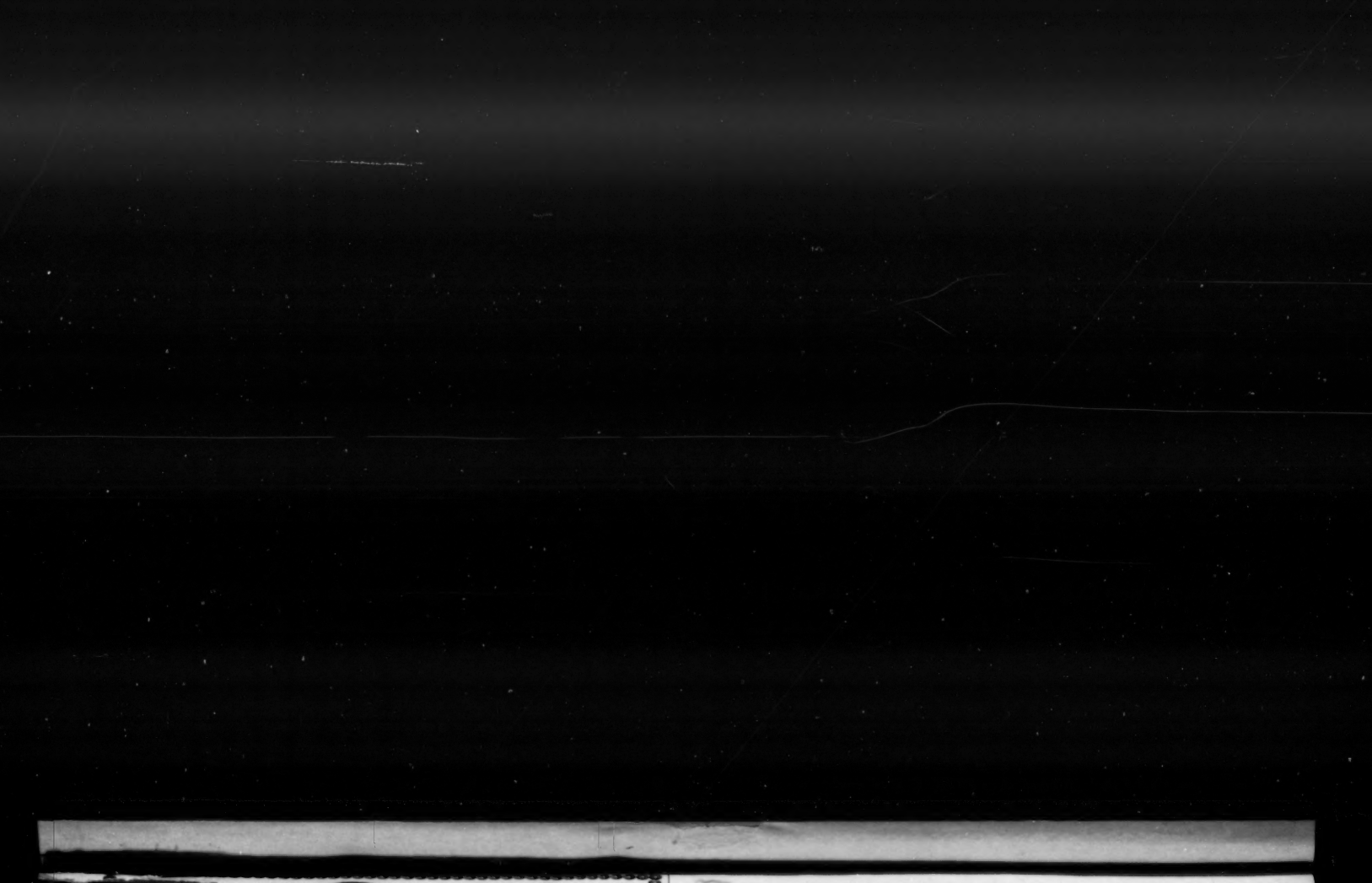

# The Black Cat

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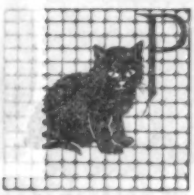
## The Purloining of Ruth Allen.

BY ELIZABETH FLINT WADE.



PUCKERVILLE is the name of a little village in New York State, snuggled at the bottom of a deep valley, as if hiding from curious eyes. The road leading to it comes down a steep hill, winds in and out among the houses, and finding nothing of importance to warrant its staying, scampers up the hill on the opposite side and is lost to sight over the top. Viewed from either hill, the road might easily be regarded as a mammoth puckering-string which drew the houses together and held them in a tight bunch, — hence the name, Puckerville.

Half way up the hill south of the village stood a small story-and-a-half cottage. This tiny house with its acre of ground was known as the "old Barber place," and was the home of two maiden sisters, Ruth Allen and Thankful Barber.

The two women had a small income, to which each added according to her strength and talent. Thankful was a large-framed woman, strong and masterful, and took the entire management of the place upon herself. She diligently cultivated the acre of ground and from it supplied the villagers with cabbage and tomato plants in the spring, vegetables and fruit in the sum-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mer, and seed cucumbers, cauliflowers, and radish pods for their fall pickling.

Ruth Allen was the elder, but as she was a small, delicate woman and slightly lame from a hurt in her babyhood, she was regarded by her more robust sister as little more than a child, and looked after and admonished accordingly. Ruth Allen, — she was always called Ruth Allen, — being a most unassuming body, never questioned Thankful's ways, but meekly submitted to her discipline even in the matter of the gowns she wore and the food she ate. Ruth Allen did tailoring for the village mothers, making over the garments of the elder male members of the family for the younger, cleaning, piecing, and pressing till they "looked as good as new."

"Now, Ruth Allen," said Thankful, as they rose from the breakfast table one bright June morning, "you set right down and finish them pants of Himey Gaskill's, for I told his mother Sunday she could have 'em to-night, and you'll have to work spry to get 'em done. I've got all I can lay my hand to this mornin', with hangin' out the clothes an' killin' bugs on the cowcumbers. Beats all how a rainy Monday puts everything behindhand."

"I did think I'd take a little walk 'round the garden 'fore I begun sewin'," said Ruth Allen. "It 'ud kind o' freshen me up a bit. I didn't sleep very well last night."

"Nonsense!" cried Thankful. "You slep' all night as good as I did, an' you ain't no business traipsin' 'round the garden this wet mornin', either. Like's not you'd step on something and spile it. 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,' and feet, too, fer that matter."

Ruth Allen took her work and sat down by the kitchen window, but she could not suppress a sigh as she looked out on the dewy freshness of the garden. Thankful bustled about, washing the breakfast dishes, then drawing a tub of clothes from under the table, began to wring them out. The window by which Ruth Allen was sitting overlooked the village, and she glanced out now and then.

"You'll get your clothes out before any one in the village," she said, as Thankful took up her basket. "There ain't anybody got theirs out, not even the Widow Filkins."

"You better be tendin' to your work 'stead of watchin' the neighbors," was all the reply that Thankful vouchsafed.

Thus rebuked, Ruth Allen plied her needle so industriously that Himey Gaskill was in a fair way to get his trousers before the time promised. Thankful's washing was soon swinging on the line.

"It's a powerful hot mornin'," she said, as she came back into the kitchen. "You ought to be thankful you can set here where it's cool, instead of breakin' your back over striped bugs in the hot sun."

"Yes, I know it, but I ain't Thankful,— I'm just Ruth Allen." This was Ruth Allen's only joke.

Thankful tied on her gingham sunbonnet preparatory to her raid on the ill-fated striped bugs.

"I wish you'd come look down in the village," said Ruth Allen. "There ain't a livin' soul got any clothes out, and there's lots of folks in the street. I wonder what's happened."

Thankful came to the window, but it was to examine the progress Ruth Allen was making on the nether garments of Himey Gaskill.

"Now, if you don't tend to your work you'll go and set in the shed door," she said. "You ain't set two dozen stitches this mornin'."

This was a situation not at all desirable, so Ruth Allen sewed swiftly, but her thoughts were busy with the possible happenings in the village. What could be the matter? Something startling, or the Widow Filkins would never have neglected her washing. By and by her curiosity got the better of her discretion. Seeing Thankful down on her knees among the cucumber hills, apparently oblivious to everything except the wholesale slaughter of her garden enemies, she laid down her work and stole softly into the keeping room, where from the secretary she took an old spyglass that had been her father's. She hurried back. Thankful was still bending over the cucumbers. She had not been missed. In her fear of being discovered by Thankful, it was some time before she could adjust the glass to her vision.

"Sakes alive!" she said, as soon as she could see clearly. "Somethin' has happened, sure. The Widow Filkins's yard is full

of folks. Look 'sif everybody in the village was there. There's a team stoppin' at the gate. It's the constable, sure's I'm alive. He's gettin' out and goin' in. My, how I wish I could hear what they're talkin' about! Goodness, here comes another, a stranger! I wonder —"

So engrossed had she become with the exciting scene, she quite forgot to watch for Thankful. She was suddenly reminded of her by having the glass taken away and hearing a stern voice say: —

"Ruth Allen Barber! I'm jest as 'shamed of you as I can be. What do you mean by spyin' on the neighbors with a glass? I have to watch you more than I would a child. You take your work and go and set in the shed door."

Ruth Allen said not a word, but humbly obeyed. Thankful locked the glass into the secretary and put the key in her pocket. Then she went back to her gardening.

"I've got the pants most done," said Ruth Allen, when Thankful came in to get the dinner. "Is Mis' Gaskill comin' after 'em, or have you got to take 'em down there?"

"She's comin' after 'em," replied Thankful. "I'll set on an iron so I can press 'em right after dinner."

The simple meal was soon prepared, and the two women sat down to their dinner. They did not linger over it, but ate as a matter of duty. Thankful finished first and rose without ceremony, brought out the press board, and began pressing the trousers. Her back was toward Ruth Allen. Suddenly she turned around and looked at her.

"You was tellin' fortunes, Ruth Allen. Don't deny it; there's the tea grounds in the saucer. A body would think you were fifteen instead of nigh fifty."

"I ain't but forty-one, come August," said poor Ruth Allen. "I wasn't tellin' fortunes, either. I was seein' if I'd get my wish."

"If wishes were fishes we'd have some fried, 'stead of eatin' salt pork half the year. Now soon's I clear off the table I'll bring down that old lilac muslin of yours, an' you can rip it up. I want to make a new 'tack,' and that'll do for the cover."

"Oh, dear!" cried Ruth Allen, "you ain't goin' to cut that up. I want to keep it."

"What for, I'd like to know? You're too old to wear such a dress, and it might be doin' us some good if 'twas made into a 'tack.'"

"I wanted to keep it 'cause 'twas the last dress ma bought me."

Now if Thankful had a soft spot in her heart, it was for the memory of her mother, and with a short "Keep it, then," she turned to her work. After the dishes were washed they exchanged their dark cotton gowns for stiffly starched ginghams, and sat down to sew in their tidy kitchen. They would have thought it immodest to sit out in the cool shade of the mammoth elm that spread its green umbrella over their front yard. The long June afternoon wore away. They sewed diligently, and talked little. Thankful's thoughts were on her work, but Ruth Allen's were straying back into her girlhood days, lured there by the sight of the stranger who had been the last she saw enter Widow Filkins's gate. He had somehow reminded her of her one lover, Jason Chadwick; indeed, in every gathering of men she was sure to see some one who reminded her of him,— and she was living over again the delightful days which had ended so suddenly. When Jason Chadwick had won her promise to be his wife, she had added to her softly whispered "yes," "if Providence is willing." If Providence was willing, Thankful was not, and while Ruth Allen wavered between her love for Jason and her fear of disobeying Thankful, Jason grew angry and left Puckerville. He had never returned, and Thankful was sure that the fire of love that had burned so fiercely in Ruth Allen's heart had long ago turned to ashes. She was mistaken. The coals were there, and the slightest breath from the olden days was sufficient to kindle them into flame, but Thankful never saw their glow.

When Thankful was watering her celery after supper, Mrs. Gaskill came through the gate.

"My, but it's warm," she said, sitting down in the door and fanning herself with her sunbonnet. "I'm clean tuckered out climbin' that hill, but it's nice and cool up here. Have you heard the happenin' down in the village?"

"No," said Ruth Allen, coming to the door; "is anybody dead?"

"Worse than that," said Mrs. Gaskill. "Folks has got to die, but they ain't got to be robbed. Somebody broke into Widow Filkins's house last night, and stole her silver spoons, and her mother's old silver candlesticks, and four dollars in money."

"Goodness me!" cried Thankful, setting down her watering-pot. "You don't mean to say that robbers have been in Puckerville. There won't be no safety sleepin' nights, after this. How'd they get in?"

"Took a ladder and clim' up the back chamber winder. The money was under a hollow chiny dog on the front mantel. Her spoons was sewed up in her best feather bed, and the bed was cut open, and the room's just full of feathers flyin' round everywhere. I don't b'lieve she'll get them feathers cleaned up all summer."

"Have they ketched the robbers?"

"No, they got away, fer they never found the things had been stole till this mornin'. I tell you we ain't none of us safe now. You'll have to keep locked up pretty tight, livin' up here alone as you do. An' what do you think? Jason Chadwick's come back, an'—"

"Ruth Allen," said Thankful quickly, "you go down cellar and fetch up a bottle of that currant shrub fer Mis' Gaskill. She's so het up 'twill be coolin' for her."

"Don't say anything 'bout him before Ruth Allen," said Thankful as soon as her sister was out of hearing.

"You don't mean she's hankerin' after him yet?"

"I don't mean anything," said Thankful with dignity, "but I don't want Ruth Allen to go thinkin' of those old times. I didn't mean she should know he was here, an'— Yes," she said as Ruth Allen came in with the currant shrub, "I'm free to confess if there's one thing I'm 'fraid of more than fire, it's burglars. When I've read of folks bein' robbed and murdered in their beds in the city, I've always been thankful that I lived where there was nothin' to molest or make me afraid, but now I shan't take a mite of comfort till that robber's ketched and shut up."

"I ain't a bit afraid of their comin' here," said Ruth Allen; "we have nothin' they'd want to steal."

"Humph, Ruth Allen,— they're just as likely to come here as anywhere, and more, too, seein' we're alone. If they didn't find

anything to steal, they'd murder us in our beds, and then how'd you feel, I'd like to know?"

Not having had any experience in that line, Ruth Allen was not able to describe her possible sensations.

"Seems to me, if I was goin' to steal anything from you," said Mrs. Gaskill, "it 'ud be your currant shrub. It's proper good, the best I ever drank."

As soon as Mrs. Gaskill went away Thankful closed the windows and drew the curtains.

"What makes you shut up so early?" said Ruth Allen. "And I never knew you to draw the curtains till we went to bed."

"Well, I ain't goin' to have any bloodthirsty villains peekin' in the windows at us, and I'm goin' to lock the doors now, too."

"I'd just as soon sleep with the doors and windows both open."

"Them that know nothin' fear nothin', I've always heard say," returned Thankful, pushing the bolt of the kitchen door into its socket.

The kitchen was hot and close, and Ruth Allen was glad when the clock struck nine. Thankful took the candle and went upstairs.

"I declare, Ruth Allen," she cried, stopping short at the top, "if I didn't forget all about shuttin' these chamber windows. There may be forty robbers in here for all we know," and she peered timidly into the dark rooms, where the flickering candle cast strange shadows.

"Let me come," said Ruth Allen. "I ain't afraid. Nobody'd carry off an old woman like me."

"I ain't worryin' 'bout your gettin' carried off," said Thankful, "but there's pa's silver watch and ma's cameo breastpin; they'd take them in a minute."

A diligent search failed to unearth any intruder, and Thankful turned to shut the windows.

"We'll smother if you shut the windows," said Ruth Allen.

"I'd rather smother than be murdered," said Thankful, as she shoved the nails into the little holes over the lower sash.

It was a very warm night, and Ruth Allen, never a good sleeper, tossed and turned on her bed. If she fell into a light slumber, it was only to be aroused by Thankful's whisper, "What's that, Ruth Allen? I'm sure I heard somethin'."

A few nights of this wakefulness began to tell on Ruth Allen, and robust Thankful confessed that she felt "kind 'o peaked" herself.

"I tell you what 'tis," said she. "We'll both be down sick if we don't get our sleep."

"I know it," replied Ruth Allen. "I don't rest hardly any nights, but I could if you'd have the windows open and not keep waking me up."

"Well, I can't sleep," said Thankful, "just as long as that robber is roamin' free, but I've thought of a way so we can both get our sleep. One of us can sleep daytimes and set up nights. It can't be me, for I've got the garden to tend to, so it'll have to be you. When it comes nine o'clock you can go to bed and sleep all day, and get up 'bout supper time. I'll have supper ready, and that'll be your breakfast. Then I'll go to bed at night, and you can set up and sew and keep watch. If burglars see a light burnin', they won't come near the house."

"Why not leave a light burnin' and both go to bed?"

"Yes, and waste candles, and mebbe set the house afire. Ruth Allen, there's no knowin' what you'd do if I didn't look after you. I can't sleep till that robber's ketched, and till they do ketch him you've got to set up nights."

Ruth Allen, with the meekness born of long submission to a stronger will, gave up, as she always did. That morning at nine o'clock she went upstairs to bed. For a long time she lay looking out on the clover-covered hillside, listening to the steady hum of the bees, as they rifled the crimson blossoms. "It's most wicked to go to bed in the daytime," she thought, "and I can't sleep, I know I can't," but even as she made this mental protest she drifted into dreamland, where she was once more a girl, while the hum of the bees was transformed into a voice she had known and loved. She slept till after five o'clock. When she went downstairs Thankful was pouring hot water in the teapot. A plate of cream toast and a dish of baked potatoes sat on the hearth.

"I'm just puttin' the tea to draw," she said. "As soon as it's done your breakfast'll be ready."

When they sat down to the table, Thankful drank a cup of tea

and ate a piece of bread. "It ain't my breakfast time," she said, when her sister asked her why she did not eat some of the toast. Ruth Allen felt as if her world was turning round the wrong way.

At nine o'clock Thankful went to bed, and left Ruth Allen to her watch. The next morning she said she had "slept like a top." In a few days the excitement of the robbery subsided, but Thankful would not consent to any change in their sleeping arrangements. "There was no knowing when that robber might take a notion to come back, and she felt as safe as a bank, with Ruth Allen keeping watch," she said. Thankful had another reason for keeping Ruth Allen in bed daytimes. Jason Chadwick had been to the house and asked to see her; but though Thankful told him that her sister would have nothing to say to him, she had caught a glimpse of him two or three times strolling in the field below the house. "He shan't see Ruth Allen if I can help it," she said fiercely, and the best way to avoid a meeting between the two seemed to be to keep Ruth Allen in bed daytimes till Jason should leave town.

Ruth Allen really enjoyed her nightly vigils. For the first time in her life she had a taste of freedom. Thankful slept soundly, as was attested by her cheerful snore, and as soon as Ruth Allen heard it she opened the doors and windows and let in the sweet night air. She hurried through the stent which Thankful always set her, and spent the rest of the time in whatever way pleased her fancy. The moon was at its full, and she wandered through the garden, stooping now and then to caress the blossoms or to pass her hands softly over the dewy leaves. Thankful always reproved her for touching the plants. "She'd spile 'em, handlin' 'em," she said. Sometimes she pulled down her hair and waved it a little on her forehead, and coiled it in a loose knot, the way she had worn it when a girl. "Jason used to call my hair his Golden Fleece. It will soon be a silver fleece," she said to herself, as she drew her comb through it.

July had come and the weather was unusually warm. The nights were not much cooler than the days. One afternoon Ruth Allen came downstairs dressed in her lilac muslin.

"What you got that on for?" said Thankful.

"Because it's so hot," said Ruth Allen. "There won't anybody see me. I don't have many callers."

The night was very warm. Just as the sky began to grow light in the east, Ruth Allen blew out her candle and went down the walk to the gate.

"I've a good mind to go up to the alder spring and get a drink. Thankful won't be up for an hour yet."

She opened the gate and went up the hill. As she went, she pulled two or three late wild roses and stuck them in her dress. The alder spring — so called because a great clump of alders grew close by it — was near the top of the hill. There was a trough where horses might drink, but in order to reach it one must make a slight detour from the main road. Ruth Allen made a cup of her hands, and filled it at the stream that ran into the trough. She dabbled the cool water on her face. She had not been to the spring in a long time. It was here she had parted from Jason, and the voice of the gurgling spring spoke only sad words to her. She leaned over and looked at her dim reflection, then started back quickly, for she thought she saw two faces in the liquid mirror.

All at once she heard the faint sound of hoof-beats. "It's probably old Mr. Purdy on his way to town," she thought. "He lives so far back on the hills, he has to get up in the middle of the night to go anywhere. I hope he won't see me. He won't unless he turns off to water, and 'tain't likely. Yes, he is comin'! What'll I do?"

She shrank back among the alder bushes. The horseman drew rein at the spring, and the horse plunged his nose into the water.

"He can't see me unless he turns clear 'round," thought Ruth Allen.

She was standing on a little clump of grass that grew in the side of the hill. All at once she felt it giving way. She made a frantic effort to save herself, but the branch to which she clung cracked with her weight. She slipped from her hiding-place. The horseman looked around. It was not Mr. Purdy, — it was the stranger whom she had seen at Widow Filkins's gate on the day of the robbery.

"Ruth Allen, Ruth Allen!" cried a familiar voice.

She gazed bewildered. Who was this bearded stranger?

"Ruth Allen, don't you know me?"

"Is it,— it's Jason!"

"Yes, it's Jason, Ruth Allen. I've stayed 'round over a month tryin' to get a glimpse of you. I've been back twice since I left you, and both times Thankful has told me you wouldn't so much as look at me. Ruth Allen, I've come back once more after you. Can you forgive, and —"

"Ruth Allen! Ruth Allen Barber! come here to me this minute!" Ruth Allen stopped with her hand half extended toward her lover. Thankful was coming swiftly up the hill.

"Is it to be me or Thankful?" demanded Jason, reaching down and clasping her hand. Ruth Allen gave one frightened glance over her shoulder, but her nights of freedom had had their effect.

"You, Jason," she said faintly.

Jason leaned from his saddle and lifted the light form of Ruth Allen and set her before him on the horse. Then he turned back the road whence he had come.

"I'd rather 'twould 'a been pa's silver watch," said Thankful, as she saw them disappear over the top of the hill.

# The Scoop of the Scarlet Tanager.

BY EDWARD B. CLARK.

HEN Tom Prentice opened his eyes for the first time in a little Westchester County farmhouse, the early morning breeze had filled the room with the scent of the lilac bloom, and a hermit-thrush was singing its "Glory, glory" song from a bush beyond the well. When, in later years, the boy's liking for birds and flowers manifested itself, an old woman who was in at the birth remembered these things and traced the effect to the cause.

They baptized him Thomas. But to nobody was he ever known as anything else than Tom. He lived a farmer boy's life, but found time for more reading than most. Tom's father, who was an improvident creature, lost his farm and died. His mother went while the thrush was singing. At twenty-one Tom was penniless and in love with Ruth Bailey, who was kind enough also to love Tom. He knew of a little place called Strawberry Lodge, with a bit of a house on it not much bigger than one of the bird boxes with which he had filled the trees about his father's place. At Strawberry Lodge he knew he could raise enough fancy fruits for the markets to make a living for Ruth and himself. It would take two thousand dollars to buy the place, and Tom hadn't a cent. He had, however, that ever-present confidence of the countryman that he "could do something" in New York. So one night he told Ruth what many another though no prettier girl had been told before, — of a "searching for a fortune and a coming back to claim," etc. The next morning Tom went to New York with ten dollars, some underwear, and a queer-looking suit of clothes.

He found himself on the third afternoon landed in the office of the city editor of a newspaper. Tom never knew just how it happened, but he had met a pleasant man who wanted him to go

with him to cash a lottery ticket, and as Tom had read the papers, it ended in the stranger being knocked down. Then there had been a young fellow in the crowd who saw a good story in the thing and who took Tom along to ask particulars. In getting them he had found out a good deal of Tom's own story, which the young fellow dubbed a hard luck tale, one which he didn't mind hearing, he said, though he did have troubles of his own. He was a reporter with something of a pull, and in two days Tom was a snapper-up of occasional light assignments on a New York daily.

They had the usual run of fun with him at first, but he caught on rapidly, and when he had learned the style of the paper he wrote acceptable stuff and went on a salary. It was told of Tom that he fell down on only one assignment, and that was when he was sent to report an accident in Central Park. There he heard a song sparrow sing, and forgot all about the prominent citizen who was said to be badly hurt. Then he chased an unknown feathered friend all over the place, and by the time he had found out what the bird was the prominent citizen had been a long time dead. After that they kept him tied down to bricks and stone pavements. Tom had in him a bit of the improvidence of his father. At the end of a year he had lots of experience and no dollars. He found himself ashamed to face Ruth when he took his fortnightly trips into Westchester County. So, one day saying, "I'll go where I can't see her, and I'll make a strike if it costs — well, anything but Ruth," he started for Chicago. Two city editors in succession turned him down when he asked for work. On his second day in Chicago there was a northeast storm that tore down the three hundred miles of open lake and sent the remains of more than one luckless lumber schooner over the breakwater into the lake front basin. One great wave had passed along at sunset. It had approached a tidal wave in magnitude, and Tom heard people talking about it the next morning. That day was cloudless and as calm as the preceding one had been stormy.

"Before I see another city editor," mused Tom, "I'll find out what these Chicago suburbs can turn out in the way of birds that we don't have down East." He bought a morning paper and took

a cable car for South Park, examining his paper vainly for a suggestion for some special article that he might undertake as an opening wedge.

At South Park he stuffed the paper into his pocket and began looking about for something new in the bird line. Here, however, his prospecting met with such poor returns that this reporter with an ornithological trend swung onto a Fifty-fifth Street car, bound for Jackson Park. He was told by the conductor that if he wanted to see some real country he must go to South Chicago and take an electric car into Northern Indiana. Half an hour afterward he was bowling along at ten miles an hour through a pretty country which stretched far away at a dead level to the right, while at the left beyond a single line of fields was a dark-green second growth of timber. It was so dense that it looked impenetrable, but at intervals Tom could catch a momentary glimpse of the blue lake beyond.

A flash of color crossed the track, dead ahead, at the height of the trolley wire. It was traveling for the woods. It struck Tom's eye, and with an exclamation he jumped from the car and made off after the bit of brilliancy, clearing a barbed-wire fence with an ease born of farm life.

"It's a scarlet tanager," he said to himself; "the bird of all birds I wanted to visit at its home."

This meteor, unlike other meteors, did not disappear, but contented itself with resting its glowing body on a limb backed by a green wall. Tom checked his pace, and approached cautiously. He arrived within twenty yards and stood still, noting every feather of contrasting black and scarlet. The tanager cocked his head and looked downward, letting Tom come five yards nearer. Then he led his observer by a series of short flights and longer stops into the thicket, whistling encouragement as Tom shouldered his way through the bushes.

Finally an opening came into view. The tanager rested a moment on a branch at the wood's edge, and then left it for an unseen resting-place beyond, just as his pursuer pushed aside the last of the tangled barrier and stumbled onto the half-sandy, half-stony shore of Lake Michigan.

The sun was at meridian and the glare from the water half

blinded him. Tom rubbed his eyes and looked about for the bird, and then rubbed his eyes again. There, twenty yards to his right, a great lead-colored hulk rose from the water, its forepart fast between two massive boulders. At its top, with feathers just ruffled by the lake wind, was the tanager. An oak bough high overhead threw the bird into a shadow which dulled the brilliancy of its plumage, and its breast was like blood. It whistled cheerfully, however, and some look of returning sense came into Tom's face. His eyes sought the songster, and under it on the dark pile he read the word *Aurora*. At that sight he started back and stood for a moment, rigid as a statue, one hand shading his eyes, the other clutching at his coat pocket. Then his pose relaxed, his right hand slipped into his pocket and produced the paper that he had been reading on his trip to South Park. He turned to the first page. No, he was not dreaming. There, in heavy black letters, running across two columns, well near the top of the page, he read this advertisement: —

"$2,500 REWARD!

"The Directors of the Braham & Horton Line of steamers will pay the above amount to any one who will locate the hull of the steel steamship *Aurora*, which went down with all on board, somewhere between Racine and New Haven, in the great blizzard of Feb. 21, 188–."

In the morning Tom had given the notice only a passing thought. Now it seemed to him the one topic of interest in the entire universe, as he stood staring first at the paper, then at the blackened hulk, while his mind rapidly reviewed what he knew of the *Aurora's* history.

He remembered the loss of the vessel. The papers had been full of it at the time. She had left port on a calm winter morning for her short run across the lake. The worst blizzard of the season had come up without warning, and the steamship had never been heard from; nor had one of the bodies of the score of men on board ever been recovered. He remembered that the heroic search, in the face of winter storms and an arctic temperature, had been kept up for weeks by the tug captains of Chicago and Milwaukee with crews of volunteers. There had been sensa-

tional features about the case not attending many disasters where the loss of life had been much greater. A bottle containing a message in the handwriting of the captain and signed by him had been picked up. It said: "The fires are out; the storm is heavy; we can see nothing and are freezing. The men are taking to the hold. Good-by."

One bitter afternoon, a week after the sailing of the steamship, a telephone message had gone from South Chicago to the city newspaper offices. Its burden was, "The hull of the *Aurora* is drifting past three miles out."

A dozen tugs had started in pursuit, but night settled down and the chase disappeared in the gloom near the Indiana shore. The next day, from oldest to youngest, the lake captains said the same thing: "It was not the *Aurora*, but only a mass of floating ice and snow, black with old squaws and ring-billed gulls."

The "mass of ice and snow, gull and duck covered," drifting toward the Indiana shore that bitter afternoon, had been the *Aurora*, after all,—perhaps with a slowly perishing crew whose sole hope of life left with the disappearance of the light of the last returning tug.

Some upheaval attending the wave which had swept the lake at sunset the day before had lifted the monster, and had given its head a new resting-place between the boulders on the shore.

Tom thrust the paper back into his pocket and walked slowly toward the vessel. His first thought touched on the discovery simply as a news story. The reporter was uppermost. Then into his mind flew the remembrance of the $2,500 reward, and following quickly came thoughts of Ruth and the fruit farm. Then this reporter, who had been led to a possible fortune by a bird, suddenly became energetic.

He rounded the *Aurora's* prow. The upper works were all gone, and there was a great gash in the vessel's side as though a steel projectile had ripped its way through. Tom reached the deck by letting himself down from the overhanging limb of an oak. Everything had been swept clean. The hatch had been battened down, but was now sprung and loosened. He hesitated to raise it, sickened at the thought of what might be hidden in the black hold beneath.

Nerving himself with an effort, he threw off the iron-sheathed lid. The position of the vessel had sent aft the water in the hold. He looked down and then drew back with a cry. The noonday sun, letting fall a great square of light through the hatchway into the darkness below, had shown a circle of dead men, staring into one another's eyes. Their faces were perfectly preserved, though the skin was drawn and yellow. Across the center of the circle two of that gruesome crew had stretched their arms and had given a last hand-clasp which had never been broken.

Sick with the horror of the scene, Tom staggered forward. Only by a supreme effort could he pull himself together. It was eighteen months, he thought, since the *Aurora* went down. What had kept that dread circle intact? Why were the bodies clothed in flesh instead of being grinning skeletons? Tom's mind could give no answer to the questions. He went back once more to the hatchway and again looked down. It was reality; the horrible circle was unbroken. Two of the full-fleshed faces were turned upward, the eyes just showing below the drooping leathery lids.

Tom pulled the hatch back in place. His first impulse was to strike direct for the owner's office, guide the agent to the place and claim the reward. Then his newspaper instinct asserted itself. Could he not sell the story at exclusive rates and get the reward too? Twenty-five hundred dollars! Strawberry Lodge would cost $2,000, but it would take $800, at least, to make it a fit residence for Ruth.

Tom made for the place where the tanager had perched. He tore from their fastenings on the bow the brass letters of the name *Aurora*, ripping out with them some peculiar-looking clamps, now almost fallen away, which had held the name in place. Producing once more the fateful newspaper, he carefully wrapped in it the letters, and swinging over the side dropped to the beach. Threading his way back through the thicket and crossing the field, he marked with an upright pole the place where he had jumped the fence. The conductor on a city-bound car told him that the place was just twenty-eight miles from the court-house. Once in town, Tom went straight to the office of the *Aurora* line.

Captain Watson, one of the owners, was in and led the way into a private office.

Tom went plump to the point. "I know where the *Aurora* is. The hull is in good condition and the vessel lies where she can be raised easily. The bodies of the crew are in the hold. She may be three hundred miles from here or she may be only thirty, but I will lead you to her on these conditions: You must bring the $2,500 reward with you in cash. The first twenty-eight miles of the journey must be made in a carriage, and the start must be made at one half hour after midnight. You are to give me the money only when you are satisfied that things are as I say."

"Go with you, after midnight, twenty-eight miles in a carriage, with $2,500 in cash in my pocket?" said the owner.

"Take with you ten men armed with Winchesters if you are afraid of a hold-up; all I want you to do is to come;" and saying this, Tom placed in the proper order on the table the letters of the word *Aurora* which he had taken from the vessel. By each letter he put the clamp which had held it to its place in the prow.

The owner looked from the letters to Tom. "I'll go with you," he said, "but I shall not go alone."

"Good enough; I'll meet you here at 12.30 sharp to-night, if I have your word you'll say nothing of the object of the trip in the meantime?"

"Not a word to any one," said Captain Watson.

Tom left him and went straight to the office of the managing editor of the *Daily Breeze*. Under a pledge of secrecy he told his story, withholding only the location of the wreck. He closed a bargain at twenty-five dollars a column for everything to be published, including pictures, on condition that his story proved a scoop. Tom secured the further condition that no one in the office, outside of the men at work on the story, was to know of it, until it was made necessary by the handing in of the copy. Then the city editor turned over to him two artists and four reporters.

At twelve o'clock that night the *Breeze* had two and one half pages of matter ready for the first edition. Tom wrote the lead and gave the account of his discovery.

Sharply at 12.30 o'clock he was at the river front. At the

foot of the stairway leading to the steamship office a carriage was waiting. On the box with the driver was a man with the butt of a Winchester between his feet. The driver looked nervous.

"Get in," said a voice from the hack. Tom jumped in and was pulled down on the back seat between two men, one of whom he recognized as Captain Watson. Opposite were two heavy-set fellows, and by the gleam of the electric light on the corner Tom saw that they were armed.

"We'll start right," said Captain Watson. "Young man, here are $2,500. The money is yours if you do as you said. But if this queer way of doing things means mischief for us, you'll get something besides money, and get it damned hard."

Tom saw the point, the roll of bills, and a big revolver.

"Drive south on Wabash and Cottage Grove Avenues until I tell you to stop," he said. He leaned forward as they went by the *Breeze* office, to hear the roar of the presses, and then settled back as comfortably as he could, considering the circumstance that each elbow rested on the butt of a revolver. Nothing was said in the rapid drive to Fifty-fifth Street save an occasional "bit of damned folly" from Captain Watson, and a muttered promise to wring the cub's neck if he was lying.

At Fifty-fifth Street Tom called a halt. "Take the shortest cut," he said, "to Stony Island Avenue. Drive along that to South Chicago Avenue, and from there to South Chicago."

Then they went on silently again until Tom asked suddenly, "What was the *Aurora's* cargo, Captain?"

"Nails in kegs and a lot of chemicals — arsenic, collodion, bichloride of zinc, alum, and bichloride of mercury, I think."

South Chicago Avenue was as black as a London chimney. Half way down to the rolling-mill the horses drew up suddenly and reared, throwing the occupants of the back seat forward. Tom felt himself grabbed by Captain Watson, and in an instant a pistol was pressed to his head. Then the voice of the driver was heard swearing frightfully because the railroad company had left an unlighted obstruction in the road.

"I thought it was a hold-up," said the Captain, "and, my boy, the forefinger of my right hand was getting mighty nervous."

It was broad daylight when they came in sight of the upright

pole at the fence. "Stop here," was Tom's order. "That's a song sparrow, *Melospiza Melodia*, that you hear singing over there," said Tom to Captain Watson, as a bit of melody floated across the field.

"You're a corker," said the Captain, with a grin.

Through the wet grass of the thicket they made their way, Tom conscious that the slightest unusual movement on his part would bring out the Captain's big gun. He broke through to the shore a yard ahead of the vessel's owner.

"There," he said, pointing.

Captain Watson pushed aside the last branches, his eyes fell on the hull.

"My God, the *Aurora!*"

They boarded the craft. The Captain looked into the hold. His gaze fell on that awful circle of silence. He reached out his hand for support.

"It's the captain and crew," he said, "the best that ever put out of a lake port. But, good God, boys, these men are recognizable! Those joining hands there are the captain and the first mate. They were brothers. The two looking up are the steward and a sailor.

"They went down there, poor devils, and froze to death. It was an awful day, the worst I ever knew.

"It's a year and a half now. There should be no flesh on those bones. This thing goes beyond me."

"The cargo, Captain," said Tom. "Those packages of chemicals were smashed and went into solution. These men were embalmed, pickled, if you will. No undertaker could have done it better. The pitch of the sea rolled the nail kegs into the space the men had cleared and pinned them down after death. The circle was kept unbroken."

And so it proved.

A minute afterward Tom climbed over the vessel's side with a package of bills closely buttoned inside his vest.

An hour afterward Captain Watson was buying a *Breeze*, and paying one cent for some information which had just cost him $2,500.

A year afterward Tom was lying on the grass in front of his

property, Strawberry Lodge, watching a bluebird carry straws into a box.

Tom sighed.

"What's the matter, Tom," asked Ruth, who sat near with her sewing.

"I was only thinking that if scarlet tanagers were plenty and nested in boxes, what a bird palace I'd put up."

# The Honeymoon at Candlestand Mountain.

BY GRACE MACGOWAN COOKE.

OBODY but me knows the true inwardness of how Bud Leonard got even with Jake Tarwater — even and something over for *lagniappe*. Just at present he wouldn't choose to graze nearer than within a hundred miles of Jake's range, and I wouldn't dare tell anybody but you, for, as it is, Jake is athirst for his gore — little idea as he has how justly that sanguineous fluid is forfeit to him; and if you should repeat it and it got around to him — well, Bud would have to cut Texas, "despising for his sake the cattle trade — there is a world elsewhere."

I always wondered at him and Jake going partners in the Palo Pinto ranch. They wasn't a pair you'd think would show similar brands at all. Bud was a fellow that would stand without hitching — anywhere; you'd have liked him, I know, and Jake — well, he was just Jake Tarwater, and I can't say no meaner of him nor any man than that.

I found out before I was done with that Candlestand Mountain business that the only reason Bud had anything to do with the sneaking coyote was that he was narrating round watching for a chance to get even with him.

How or when Jake had done him a meanness, "it boots me not to say," which is my friend the poetry-sharp Byron's way of saying that it doesn't cut any ice here.

At any rate, Bud had sworn he'd be up with him when he did it, and his chance came when Tarwater, the great unbroke five-year-old, went about to marry him a wife.

Did Leonard help to let him in for a bad bargain? Oh, no; I've known Miss Lovibel Beeler since she was a slim little girl, riding a burro — riding it like the mischief, too, and trying to play lasso with a stolen clothes-line. A better nor a prettier girl there is not in the

State of Texas. She's got just one drawback, but that's a big one — she's old man Beeler's daughter.

Old Pod Beeler is a true type of the prehistoric cattleman, a type now about as extinct as the dodo. At any time since I've known him he would quarrel at the faint oscillation of an eyelid, shoot at the drop of the hat, could carry more whisky a-horseback than any man south of the "natural stripe," wasn't rightly sober till he was four fourths drunk, and was, as the rental agents say, in many other ways an extremely eligible and desirable father-in-law.

It may be that he felt his unfitness for the peaceful and even idyllic rôles of father-in-law and grandsire. It is more likely that his conduct in regard to his daughter's numerous suitors was dictated by a keenly felt need of something over which to pick a quarrel.

You see he is the deadest of shots, and most of the good folks with whom he has differed have quit quarreling altogether, and gone where the wicked cease from troubling. A unanimity of behavior which has had a wonderfully ameliorating influence upon any foolish grudge or animosity others might have been tempted to cherish toward him.

I reckon that I'm the only man that's walking around in Texas alive, to tell that I once disagreed with old Pod Beeler.

It was some years ago, when we were both younger than we are now, and though I'm obliged, under these circumstances, to say it for myself, I wasn't any slouch at that sort of thing, then.

If I remember rightly, I was chalking up a notice and description of a lost pony on the store wall. I spelled it w-h-i-t-e, white; and old Pod said it ought to be w-i-t-e, white.

We fought to a draw — a draw! — and old Pod was so pleased with my style of argument that he hired me then and there for a cook.

You can't quarrel with your cook in Texas, and though I've acted as ranch boss and *majordomo*, too, for the old man since then, we've jogged along peaceably for nearly fifteen years.

But this thing of his friends and the community at large agreeing *en masse* with any opinions he may feel moved to express has got so pronounced of late years that Pod finds himself, in his old

age, most mighty hard up for a good row now and again, to keep his hand in and his pluck up.

Lovibel and her postulant wooers fell in most admirably to fill this long-felt want.

He gave it out to all and singular that Lovibel wasn't going to marry anybody, and at the time Jake Tarwater came into the roundup the old chap had managed to have fifteen rough-and-tumble fights and three shooting scrapes on her account, besides several unscheduled collar-and-elbow scraps that didn't come to much, and one or two fellows who disappointed him and ran off.

He undoubtedly felt that in Lovibel he had much too good a thing to give up, and he was working it for all it was worth.

Jake, in his usual sneaking way, made a strong play at getting on the good side of the old man; but as old Pod didn't have any, that cinch slipped.

Old Beeler worked Jake as I'd observed him to work most of the others. Let him carry Lovibel to roundups and ranch dances a few times, and generally graze pretty free about his range till he thought the girl had her brand good onto him, and then he blew up.

He announced to all comers that he'd heard that Jake had a wife and family back in Missouri, and that he intended to shoot him on sight if he ever heard of his fooling around his daughter Lovibel again.

I reckon there never was a worse scared man than Jake Tarwater when he got this notice.

You see he had his own reasons for feeling extra panicky. Old man Beeler had given him more privileges and chances than he gave most, because Lovibel didn't seem to take to him much. But she was young and fond of going, and she could dance — well, she just could! So, as old Pod had run off all her other beaux, there was nothing for it, if she wanted to go (and seeing the life she led with old Pod at home, she always did want to), but to go with Jake.

When that Missouri family story broke loose Lovibel came to me. I'm some older than Pod is; I've loved her like a daughter fifteen years and done my part at straightening out the troubles she'd bring to me — well, she came to me and said: —

"O Hank," — Hank Pearsall's my name, — "I just wish I was dead, that's all! Here's pa carrying on the way he is, and I'm married to Jake Tarwater."

"Oh, no," I said, for I thought she was just joking; "it hasn't gone as far as a legal brand and double harness, and you're well rid of the chump."

She looked at me real scared. "Why, you've said yourself, more than a dozen times, that my only chance was to run off and marry some good man," she said, beginning to cry.

Well, I had; and if I'd been twenty years younger, and a marrying man, I'd have been game to rustle the bridegroom for that wedding,— but Jake Tarwater!

"How did it happen?" I asked.

"We were over at the dance at Emerald," she said, "and Jake came and sat by me on the porch, and said,— oh, a lot of things you wouldn't care to hear, about how much he thought of me, and, if I'd have him, how happy he'd try to make me, and then he told me he'd asked pa, and that pa was willing, only he said for us to just go off and get married whenever we wanted to, and not bother him. I thought maybe that was so, because you know pa did treat him as if he liked him till just here lately. He wanted me to go across the street to the office of a justice of the peace who was a friend of his and be married right then, and I wouldn't."

I heaved a great sigh of relief. "Good girl," I said; "then there's no harm done."

But she went on, and, like a woman, the postscript was the nub of the story. "Well," she added, "he kept on begging and arguing, and said that he and his partner, Bud Leonard, had sold out the Palo Pinto because Bud was going East to be married, and he had plenty of ready money now to take me anywhere I wanted to go for a wedding trip,— Europe or anywhere,— and so I thought it didn't matter what became of me any more, and if pa was suited, why, I might as well be, and I went."

"Lord, Lord," I groaned inwardly, and Lovibel stock went down considerably in my books, "you never can tell what'll catch a woman. A trip to Europe for a year at the most, and Jake Tarwater for the rest of her life!" Out loud I commented

pretty short. "Well," I said, "then he'd better come and get you, and take you to Europe — things are some hot here!"

"Come and get me — Europe!" she repeated, mighty slow and scornful. "He had to own up, as soon as we were married, that we'd have to keep it dead secret, that he'd never dared to name marrying me to pa; and then, after awhile, he let out that they hadn't sold the ranch at all, and that he and Bud expected to stay right here and work it just the same after he got the news broke to pa.

"I spoke to him pretty rough, I guess. He said I was like my father, anyhow. When he wanted me to slip off and get over to Santa Fé, and meet him there, I told him I didn't have to go chasing all over the known world alone after any man, and that if he wanted me, he knew where to come for me. But now he's so scared over this tale pa's telling on him, and the way he's talking about him, that he'll never come — and I'm glad. Only sometimes when I think of pa finding out about it, why, I think I'd better be with Jake."

"Never you mind, honey," I said; "maybe going off with Jake is the best card you've got left now, and then, again, maybe there's a right bower staked out somewhere for you, that we can get our hands on and win the pot. Anyhow, I'm going to see Jake myself. The point is, do you like the fellow, or would you rather have some of the others? You just pick out your man, and I'm game to settle Jake, if he's not the one you want."

"Oh, I hate them all," she sobbed. "How could a girl like anybody that hung around and was so afraid of her father — I don't like anybody but you, Hank."

Well, I took this last with some salt, but I went over to see Jake. He said, when I talked to him, that his intentions were of the best. He was sure Lovibel was plenty gone on him, and just afraid to say so on account of her father, and what he intended after cajoling her into marrying him secretly, he said, was to break it to old Pod by degrees, and then, according to his tell, it was expected that they'd all just wade in bliss chin-deep.

As it wouldn't have been safe to open up on old Pod with a thing of the sort — by degrees or otherwise — unless you'd had him hog-tied, disarmed, and pegged out on the prairie, I don't

know when he expected to begin, but it was plain that this story about the Missouri family (and the old man added a kid to the layout every time he told it, and twins of a Sunday) ran into his calculations considerably.

I found that Bud was trying to josh him around a bit and rouse some courage, but that he had just laid down. I could see that he even had wild notions by spells of going back to that wife and family in Missouri, only he couldn't, for of course old Pod had invented them for the occasion, so Jake didn't have 'em to go to.

Well, Lovibel went around mighty white for awhile, quiet and pretending she didn't put her money on anybody, nor care a cent how things went, and Jake was lying low and afraid to be seen in the Beeler end of the county, when Bud Leonard had an inspiration.

Down on the old Alamositas trail to Santa Fé there is a very odd little mountain. It's a thing you'd like to see; three hundred feet high, if it's a foot, and as flat on top as a table. The sides are rock, stratagem on stratagem, as Shoof Hepburn of the X-bar outfit used to say.

I reckon it was a little island once, when "all the world was in a sea"; and it must have stood up in a pretty stiff current, for the water has undercut these walls of rock — eroded is, I believe, the proper word — till the top overhangs them all around.

This level top space is about three acres in extent, rich alluvial soil, covered with the finest pasture, and it has living water.

The thing is on the land of the Broken Arrow company, and when their men take beef cattle down to Santa Fé they always carry a couple of extra ponies along, drive them up there and leave them till they come back, in three months, when they find them as fine and fat as stall-fed steers. The ponies can't get down, you see, and nothing can get at them to hurt them.

How do they get the ponies up? Oh, I forgot that I hadn't told you that.

There is, leading steeply up to the western brow of this natural fortress, a narrow, rocky trail. The little spring on top, fed by underground streams from a couple of peaks standing east and west, and hundreds of feet above this little table-top, makes a small waterfall over the side, and is joined half way down by a bold stream which leaps right out of the living rock. The two

go brawling and roaring under this trail I speak of, which crosses them in a natural bridge fifty feet high, and less than three feet wide in some places.

I've known ponies that couldn't be gotten over it without blindfolding them, and some men prefer taking it in the manner the Lord provided for the serpent and his progeny, to walking over it erect.

This bridge trail leads out boldly from the brow, and where it leaves the top there used to lie four or five big round boulders, which we boys would roll across it to keep the ponies in — though it was only now and then a bronco with the spirit of Satan in him who would have been likely to tackle it.

Well, as I say, when Bud saw Jake so down on his luck, ready to give the girl up; in hourly terror that old Pod, who, he knew, was praying a-foot and a-horseback, as the prophet says, for a square chance — or even a three-cornered one — at him, would find out about that little transaction at the justice's office, he had an inspiration.

When he came to me about it I let on to him pretty free as to what I thought of his partner, and told him that Lovibel wasn't going to run away with him none, even if he had the sand to propose such a thing. But that wasn't his plan. He never had hung around the ranch, nor took none of old Pod's sass, like most of the rest of the boys in the county, but he had seen enough of Lovibel to know that he wanted to help her out of the nine hole, and he proposed that she shouldn't have no responsibility nor worry at all; Jake should steal her, carry her off to Candlestand Mountain, take a few dynamite cartridges with him, blow up the bridge when they were safely over, and let old Pod rage it out in peace and comfort. In a few weeks, when the old man had cooled down all right, he promised to go for them with some sort of hook and ladder arrangement and get them off their perch.

I didn't like Jake well enough to go into the thing on his account, but the more Bud talked to me, the more I saw it was the only thing to be done, for Lovibel was living in hourly terror that the old man would find out, and when he did she would rather be anywhere than where he was; so the more I heard of the plan, the better I liked it.

Jake jumped at the idea. My private opinion is that he was so scared he'd have been only too glad to be up on the top of Candlestand, out of reach of old Pod, with the bridge blown down, girl or no girl, but of course I never asked him, and he never said.

Old man Beeler used to go down to Santa Fé himself, to trade, and he always took Lovibel along for fear somebody would, in his absence, cut in and marry her. I usually stayed at home to run the ranch, but this year I insisted on going, for I was expected to carry messages to Lovibel for Bud, and I wanted to see the fun.

We went in the ambulance, with a small outfit and a few led ponies for riding. There is a good camping place about ten miles from Candlestand, and I was to have them make camp there. Old Pod always slept limber drunk, a stampede of buffalo bulls wouldn't have wakened him, and it was then and there that Bud proposed to help Jake steal his girl.

Bud had some of his fun out of the provisioning of that hilltop for Jake's honeymoon retreat. He frowned Tarwater down sternly when he talked about putting in a pack or two of cards; asked him what he thought a tender young creature like Lovibel would know about seven-up or cinch.

He expressed unmixed horror when the other wanted only a gallon jug of "common disturbance" along, and he'd have left out Jake's navy plug, only he thought it wasn't well to push matters too far. So he contented himself with spilling the kerosene over it.

The things Bud omitted from that chuck wagon and the things of which he put in an irritating over-supply were ingeniously planned. He had time to think about it, and he concentrated his mind upon it.

The night we made camp near Candlestand was as black as the hinges of hades. Jake was loafing around the vicinity, and Bud had happened along "by accident" and camped with us. He did that so he could see that the old man got "drowsy" enough,—though I told him that would see to itself,—notice where everybody was staked out when we turned in, and give Jake the signal to come up at the proper time.

Tarwater had two little Spanish horses, as clever as trick ponies, and Bud had him rig them with a couple of poles running back like shafts from the girth of one to the girth of the other, and a sort of hammock slung between to put Lovibel in, something like the Indians carry their children and sick.

When the time came and Bud give the signal, there was no Jake. Finally he had to slip out of camp and round him up, and even then he couldn't get the blamed jack-rabbit within hailing distance of the fire. Jake said it was more dangerous for him than for anybody else, because Beeler was laying for him, and known to be. Bub didn't stop to argue and say that old Pod usually killed one man as dead as another; but he took the bridle of Jake's foremost pony and led him as near the camp as he dared, and came over to wake me. I was awake, of course, and when he whispered, "I don't want to get you into any trouble, Hank, but nobody'll ever know if you come and give me a hand now, and the game's up if you don't," I hopped up pretty lively.

We lifted the figure that we knew to be the right one, in spite of its all-enveloping Navajo blanket, very carefully from its cozy nest with toes to the fire, carried it over and laid it in the hammock, and Bud put out for Jake at top speed.

That worthy had drifted nearly a mile down the trail by the time he caught him. Said he thought old Pod might wake up and find him there, and it would make it bad — for Bud!

Leonard didn't have to hurry the procession any. Jake hardly stopped to ask if Lovibel was square on the deal before they pounded off as hard as they could tear. About dawn — it was three o'clock when they started — Candlestand came in sight.

Jake kept looking back at Bud as he rode behind. "Dynamite in place?" he hollered.

Bud nodded.

"Betcher the dew'll damp that fuse and it won't go off," he howled. He was getting pretty wild.

"You shut up," his companion cautioned, "and don't wake this girl till we get her over that bridge. She seems to be asleep now, and she'll go over easier that way."

They got down and took the ponies' bridles, Jake the fore and Bud the hind one. Lovibel appeared to have gone very sound

asleep, indeed; the hammock was as quiet as though it held a bundle of clothes only.

Once safely over,— and that was sure a ticklish passage,— Bud started the game he had been laying to play, by hitting the pony he led a tremendous slap, and firing his pistol over its head.

When it went off, of course the foremost pony and Jake had to get a lively move on them.

I guess Jake thought for a minute that the old man was after them; he looked back scared enough. The hammock was heaving and boiling, and such language was issuing from it as seemed to surprise him — coming from Lovibel.

Bud didn't stop to observe all this; he caught it on the run as he sailed back to the bridge, fired the fuses and hustled on over out of danger.

When he got to a somewhat sheltered spot, where he calculated no flying rocks would hit him, supposing a premature discharge, he looked back.

Old Pod Beeler had scrambled out of the hammock and was confronting Jake, swearing as only one man in Texas can swear, and reaching for the gun Leonard had taken off him the night before, when he was blind drunk, and before Bud laid him gently in his cradle bed.

When he found the gun was gone he reached down for his knife, which was right then in Leonard's boot-leg. Bud had been humane. He had disarmed him. The old man hadn't so much as a wooden toothpick on him.

You see Leonard didn't want Jake murdered. He wanted him to live to enjoy old Pod's undiluted society for weeks and weeks — old Pod, deprived of whisky, without a card to touch — and bliss rolled in on his soul as he thought of the kerosened tobacco!

The old man, who had been swearing away all this time like the wrong sort of praying machine, wanting to know where in various kinds of places he was, and who in various kinds of people had brought him there, and asking all sorts of inconsiderate questions which Jake was in no condition to answer, now found he was weaponless (if you count his tongue out) and started on the keen jump for Jake.

Jake lit out like a mustang. The audience would have given

a heap to have stayed and seen the end of that chase, but the fuses were sputtering close up, and he turned and ran too.

As he reached his pony the blast tore loose. The bridge broke all up and fell, a mess of rock, into the stream, which fought it awhile, flurried around a little, found the easy way through, as water will, and ran on down the cañon, laughing over the joke.

You needn't ask me how Jake and old Pod got down. Neither Bud nor I assisted them to descend, anyhow. I had to keep strictly out of it, you see, and know nothing, so I could tell nothing. You may ask the floating cowboy population of Jack County and West Texas generally, in the song, legend, epic, and story of whose camp-fires the tale is embalmed and told with as many variants and contradictory endings as an old ballad.

Some of these say that the illy assorted "Two on a Tower" stayed up there till old Pod, driven by starvation and rage, ate Jake, and was always afterward troubled in his mind to decide which one he mostly was. Another recites that they came down from that chastening experience as gentle and loving as kittens, and lived ever afterward a Damon and Pythias existence. Yet another, in verse this time, and plainly but a bald parody on the Kilkenney Cats, tells that they fought, and fought, and fought, till there was nothing left but Jake's boots and old Pod's breath and whiskers.

But Leonard hadn't time to stay, much as he would have liked to do so, to see the outcome of his inspiration.

He knew Jake, cornered and desperate, would fight — a rat will. He knew old Pod, whiskyless, tobaccoless, provisioned with two ounces of coffee, a half barrel of sugar, plenty of good nourishing bread, and pounds and pounds of pepper, would shame a fiend from the bottomless pit; but he had other fish to fry than staying to see the fun.

He had to go back on the trail some miles and inform Lovibel — with whom, I had found out by this time, he had a better acquaintance than Jake, her father, or even I had ever suspected — of the scheme, and take her on to Santa Fé on a wedding trip.

You see that careless lie Jake threw in for good measure in regard to Bud's being about to go home to get married was the thing that got him the girl, though he never guessed.

But then the term of the J. P. who married her and Jake had expired a month before he spliced them. He wasn't any more account to marry anybody than a last year's bird's-nest, but he was just a cow-puncher and careless about dates, and he forgot to remember when he was elected, and kept on judging, and marrying, and divorcing people after his brand had expired, as it were.

Bud Leonard never had any trouble with his father-in-law, either. Maybe this is because they've never seen him since they got married. It's a simple plan; any one — a young child, even — might have thought of it, and by this means they get along with old Pod first rate.

# The Man Without a Name.

BY FRANCES M. BUTLER.

RICHMOND, Virginia, in July, 1865. The heat was intense, the sun, glaring down on the almost deserted streets, making the blackness of the burnt district look blacker than ever, by force of contrast.

In the Capitol Square, however, the grass looked fresh and green, and the tree tops rustled in the breeze. It was such a relief to the weary young man who turned in from the street to one of the broad walks of the square that he paused in the shade, and lifting his hat from his brow, stood still and looked about him. At the same moment, two men talking together at a little distance parted company. One of them, in passing, glanced at the young man under the tree, stopped short and extended his hand. "Captain Peyton, I believe," said he. "I fear you don't remember me. My name is Browning."

"I did not recognize you at first, doctor, but when you spoke I knew you immediately," said Peyton. Then, after touching gravely upon the sweeping changes made by war since their last meeting, he continued: —

"Are you living in Richmond now?"

"Yes, as well here as elsewhere," said Dr. Browning, with a sigh. "And you?"

"Oh, I am tobacco-planting up in the country. I have exchanged my sword for a plowshare."

"You are lucky to have something to settle to," said the other; "so many of our poor boys are utterly at sea, with no idea where to turn for a living. By the bye, we have here a most singular and painful case. I was speaking of it to my friend just now.

"With the last batch of prisoners of war sent home from the hospitals in and around Washington, came a man wounded and taken prisoner some time last spring — no one knows exactly when

or where. It seems he had a severe contusion on the head and several bad flesh wounds, — altogether a bad case of inflammation and brain fever. Well, the unfortunate man has lost his memory completely. All his life prior to his illness is a blank. He has not a clue to his identity; no one knows anything about him; he is a lost atom! What is to become of him is a puzzle."

"How terrible!" exclaimed Peyton. "Surely he must remember his State."

"No; he remembers nothing, not even his arm of the service. As I said, his mind is a blank concerning his entire life up to the time when he regained consciousness, after many weeks in the hospital. He has forgotten even his name! Similar cases are recorded. In fact, they're not uncommon. But usually there are some clues, or friends, or acquaintances, to identify one. This poor fellow is as completely isolated as though he had dropped from another sphere."

Peyton's hazel eyes softened sympathetically. "I can conceive of nothing more terrible," he said. "Does he seem a man of education?"

"Yes, I should judge so. His manners are quite those of a gentleman," said Dr. Browning, "but it is hard to say. He is shy and reticent, — seems quite hopeless. His case has been noticed in the papers," he went on after a pause, "and I have sent advertisements to several of our principal cities and towns, but in these days of 'chaos come again,' newspapers are a poor medium of communication in this part of the world. He has been in Richmond some weeks, but the mystery is no nearer a solution."

"I don't know that I could help you at all," said Peyton, "but, do you know, I feel tremendously interested in this man; in fact, would like to see him, if I might."

Then, as Dr. Browning assented genially, the two walked away together down Grace Street to the boarding-house where this mysterious patient was staying. The man was sitting at the window of his room when they entered, but rose to welcome them. What his age was it was impossible to judge from his appearance. His hair, scanty and quite gray, and his bowed figure, might have belonged to an old man, but his dark eyes

were bright and intelligent, and his face, though thin and delicate, was not lined with age.

As he came forward he limped, and seemed to move with difficulty.

"I have been telling Captain Peyton about you, John," said Dr. Browning, "and as an old Confederate companion-in-arms he wished to come and see you."

"I am very glad to meet Captain Peyton, and am obliged to him for his kind interest," said the man in a low, pleasant voice.

Peyton looked at him inquiringly. No, he had never seen him before — of that he was certain.

"Dr. Browning has told me of your misfortune," said he kindly, "and though I have not much in my power just now, I should be more than glad if I could help you in any way, Mr. —" Peyton broke off in confusion, remembering suddenly that the poor fellow had no name.

"The men," said the other gently, "called me 'Johnny.' Dr. Browning suggests that I shall call myself 'John Richmond.'"

"Only until you succeed in finding out the name you really own," said the doctor cheerfully. "It certainly must be very inconvenient to be without a label in this work-a-day world."

While the doctor was speaking, John lifted his eyes to Peyton's face with such a look of patient, hopeless woe that the young man felt his heart go out to him with pity.

"Let us hope you will soon be all right," said he, trying to speak encouragingly, and then, moved by an unaccountable impulse, he found himself suddenly pressing John Richmond to return home with him to Bentivar, as an assistant on his farm. To the latter's doubts and protestations the doctor replied with such accounts of the bracing effects of the mountain air and out-of-door exercise that Richmond was finally won over. At least, he admitted, he knew something of horses, and would make a trial of the new life so unexpectedly opened to him.

After arranging that his new assistant should meet him at the railway station the next day, Peyton left the house, as he said, to interview a man who "wanted to sell him two old mules at half their value."

"Poor chap," he thought, as he walked slowly down Grace

Street, "I never felt so sorry for any one in my life. I really don't know how I can stand having him around — such a strain on one's feelings — and yet, I somehow felt obliged to offer him help. What a pet mother and Lucy will make of him! Between them it will go hard if they don't manufacture him a memory!"

The next morning saw Mr. Peyton and John Richmond arrived at Bentivar, the home of the Peytons. The estate was situated in Albemarle County, near the pretty little town of Charlottesville, which nestles in the valley of the Rivanna, encircled by the grand sweep of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The ravages of war had spared the fine old homestead; the negroes, for the most part, still clung to their old home; and except that the daughter of the house wore the dress of a widow, and her mother mourned two sons dead on the field of battle, externally little was changed.

Mr. Peyton's mother, his sister, Mrs. Leigh, and her little daughter, Rosa, formed the family at Bentivar, and it needed only the telling of John Richmond's sad story to enlist all their sympathies in his behalf.

A house in the yard, used formerly by the elder Mr. Peyton as a business office, was fitted up for Richmond's use, and there he was soon quite at home. Mr. Peyton reported him a valuable assistant in managing the plantation, and wonderful in his knowledge of horse-flesh. Little Rosa Leigh was devoted to him from the first. The dogs, too, quite deserted the roomy porticoes of the house to lie on the little porch of the office watching with dumb sympathy the lonely man, as he sat in his favorite seat, his sad gaze fixed on the distant blue of the mountains.

"Have you no remembrance of some place, or person, of which you sometimes have a glimpse?" Mrs. Leigh asked him one day. "Most people, I think, have those shadowy memories of childhood."

"No," said Richmond sadly. "I thought I could remember having been in Richmond, but every man in the army had probably been there at some time during the war. Names, places,— everything is a blank. If it were not that feeling seems dulled, I think I should have gone crazy long ago. There is one thing," he went on, moved to confidence by the sympathy in her soft eyes,

"I know I had a wife, fair and young, with golden hair like that of little Rosa. Since I have been here I have dreamed of her. I had never done so before. I see her, oh! so plainly; she calls me by my name, a short name, I think, of one syllable; but when I awake I cannot remember it. Sometimes I fancy that could I only remember that, it would be a clue to everything else."

"Even to remember so much is a gain," said Mrs. Leigh cheerfully. "Dr. Browning said the return of memory was generally gradual. I have some lists of names, Christian names and surnames, which I will send you. Try reading them over to see if any seem familiar."

Richmond thanked her with his usual grave courtesy. As she went up the path to the house, Mrs. Leigh looked back at the lonely figure on the porch of the office. His drooping head, listless hands, indeed his whole attitude, expressed sadness, isolation, hopelessness.

"He will never know," she thought; and as her mind conjured up the picture of his young wife waiting for him in some Southern home, uncertain of his fate, a wave of feeling overwhelmed her.

Before she could reach her room her brother had come upon her in the big entrance hall, and, distressed at her evident grief, gently drew from her the cause. But at Peyton's suggestion that he ought to send Richmond from this household, already burdened with its own sorrows, she protested earnestly. "Don't think of that," she cried. "He is still so weak; besides, it is good for me to have some one to take care of. Indeed it is."

"Well, well," said Peyton, "I can't have you make yourself sick over him, remember. Poor girl," he thought, as Lucy passed up the stairs; "after all, caring for him may, as she says, keep her from brooding over her own sorrow." And then his mind turned to that other girl widow, bereaved, like Lucy, by the recent war. It had been six years since he met Margaret Wylie at the New Orleans boarding-school where she was then his sister's room-mate. At that time she had been only a bright-eyed school-girl; yet even then he had loved her deeply and hoped to make her his wife. And the strength of that love had survived the news of her sudden marriage and the years of

silence and separation, as its delicacy had respected her widowhood. It was not from native kindliness alone that Peyton's manly sympathy had sprung. His own secret sorrow had brought him into closer kinship with all who suffered.

. . . . . .

One morning early in the spring of 1866, John Richmond stood on the lawn at Bentivar. The sun had just risen, the birds were singing their dawn songs. From the farmyard sounded the tramp of the cows marching out to pasture, and the shrill cackle of the hens. Somewhere somebody was whistling a lively tune. Far away the blue of the mountains seemed to melt into the deeper blue of the sky. The hills and valleys were clothed with tender green, except where the rich chocolate hue of the soil told of freshly plowed furrows. The woodlands showed that "first faint hue before the green" which beautifies the trees before they fairly burst into leaf.

"A year," John was thinking, "a whole year, and yet not a trace, no clue. I wonder I do not go mad with the horror of it! Shall I die like a nameless dog? I have conned lists of names until my brain was dizzy. I have pored over maps, and read accounts of battles, hoping for some cue, some word, some name which might bridge the chasm — all in vain! One is as familiar as another. I seem to have heard them all. And yet sometimes I seem to be on the verge of discovery. It is all there, but shrouded with a veil I cannot pierce. In my dreams I see her, I hear her, but when I awake —" The sound of a step approaching interrupted him. He turned and greeted Mr. Peyton with his usual grave military salute.

"Mr. Peyton," said he, "if you can spare me, I should like to ride into Charlottesville to-day."

Then as Peyton assented, secretly a little surprised, for Richmond rarely cared to go abroad, he continued, "The fact is, Mr. Peyton, I dreamed last night — such vivid dreams! And though, as usual, I can't remember them, the impression remains that I dreamed of Charlottesville, and that I found there some trace, some sign, — I hardly know what, — some clue to my former self and life."

Upon Peyton's pressing him to explain what he meant by "im-

pression," — "I can hardly explain," said Richmond, lifting his mournful eyes with their depths of patient woe to Peyton's face, and then fixing them again on the distant mountains. "As I have told you, I dream always of my wife. Last night it seemed to me that she was in distress, she needed my help. I knew why in my dream, but when I awoke in agony, her voice sounding in my ears, I could remember nothing, not even the name by which she called me. And yet I feel as if I must soon find out. It is as if I could know all, except for a sort of a thick veil which interposes between my waking self and my full consciousness, but which is partly withdrawn in my sleep. It seems foolish, but I have a sort of presentiment that something awaits me in Charlottesville."

He had rarely spoken so freely, and Peyton's heart ached for the man, as he realized, once more, the sadness of his isolation.

A few moments later Richmond was on horseback, riding into the town. His way lay along the banks of the Rivanna, now clothed with tender green, purple with violets, and gay with the scarlet and yellow columbines. The air was balmy, and met him at every turn with a soft caress almost like a kiss. Something like a hope revived in the heart of the lonely man. He checked his horse, took off his hat, and raised his right hand.

"O God," he prayed aloud, "grant me a sign — a token only. Let me know, and I will be content."

He looked around, almost expecting to hear a voice or to see a sign in the clouds, but all was still except for a robin on a bough overhead, who broke out into his spring song. "Be cheery, be cheery," the notes seemed to say; and a little red ground-squirrel ran chirping along a fallen tree-trunk by the roadside.

In the town, Richmond executed a commission or two for Mr. Peyton, inquired at the post-office for letters, then visited the newspaper offices, and finally the telegraph station. There were no tidings for him anywhere.

More dispirited than ever for that transient gleam of hope, now faded, he walked aimlessly through the streets of the quiet little town. Presently he overtook two or three carriages following a white hearse that contained a tiny coffin. Almost without knowing what he did, he followed it. The cemetery gates stood open,

and he passed in, halting under a budding tree, just inside. Some distance beyond him the procession stopped at a little grave. One slight figure, clad in black and veiled in crape, he thought must be the mother. He was too far away to distinguish her features, but he divined the anguish that filled her heart and shook her frame. The clergyman's clear, solemn tones broke the silence, repeating the burial service. A turtle-dove near by cooed gently, calling to its mate. The sunshine fell golden on the green turf.

As the clergyman stooped, and, taking a handful of earth, scattered it gently on the little coffin, a low sob burst from the mother's lips. At that sound John Richmond felt himself seized by an almost overmastering impulse to rush to the woman's side, to cry out, "How I wish that I were in your child's place, and he were again in your arms!" Then the wave of feeling ebbed, leaving him cold and sick. With trembling limbs he made his way out of the cemetery, and back to the place where he had left his horse. On the way he entered a little restaurant, and asked for a cup of coffee. When the girl in attendance brought it, she looked at him with pity in her eyes. "Ain't you sick?" she asked. "No, I am only tired," he answered. She went away, and he saw her speaking with another woman. When he passed them on his way out, "Struck for death," he heard the elder woman say. He wondered dully what she meant by that, as he rode homeward by the beautiful river road, taking no heed of the fresh beauty of nature, which, in the morning, had lifted his soul heavenward. For now the last spark of hope was extinguished.

When he dismounted at Bentivar he was so weak that the frightened hostler helped him to his room and called the ladies of the house. When Peyton came in, he heard that Richmond was quite prostrated.

"I have feared this," he said to his mother and sister that evening. "He has been growing weaker all winter, and though he never complains, I am sure he suffers. Browning warned me that if he did not recover his memory, his mental anxiety would certainly undermine his bodily health. It had already been weakened, you know, by his long illness." Peyton sighed.

"Did he say anything about his presentiment?" asked Mrs. Leigh, after a short silence.

"No," replied Peyton; "he only shook his head when I said something about it; he couldn't speak, you know, but I never saw a sadder, more hopeless face. Dr. Allen thinks he will soon be able to be out again, but there can only be one end to it all. If we could only find that dream-wife, he might get well. I sometimes wonder if she has any existence apart from his dreams!"

Neither the spring months nor the radiant Virginia summer brought the hope that alone meant health to the lonely man at Bentivar. One evening, early in autumn, John Richmond, very feeble now, had walked into the orchard adjoining the lawn, and was sitting on a bench under a wide-spreading apple tree, in the shadow of a tall hedge. The full moon was rising in the east, while above the western mountains the clouds of sunset were piled in jewel-tinted masses. On the lawn some visitors were strolling in twos and threes. From the open windows of the house floated gay voices and laughter — then a carriage drove away. The lonely man sat quiet under the tree. "They are all so kind, so considerate," he thought, "and yet I am as much alone, as solitary, as though I were a castaway on a desert island." He took off his hat, and raising his eyes to the skies, where a few stars were beginning to appear, "O Father in heaven," he murmured, "if the end be not far off, grant that I may know before I go, if only for one hour." Then he bowed his head and sat in silence.

Presently little Rosa Leigh, who had spied him from the lawn, came rushing to his side. "Dear Mr. Richmond," said the child, "why do you sit here all by yourself? I have been wondering where you could be."

"It is so restful, dear," he said gently. "I love to sit here and look at the beautiful mountains; I think I shall not be here to see them very much longer," he continued, speaking more to himself than to the child.

She stood silent, looking at him, then she said, "Mamma said I must not tease you; but can't you remember anything yet — not one little teenty bit?"

"No, my darling," he answered. "I have almost given up

trying. I shall remember in another world." And taking the hand of the child, he added earnestly, "I should like to know before I go; pray for me, Rosa, that it may be so."

"I will, Mr. Richmond," said the child, looking at him with serious eyes; "and I will ask mamma and grandma and Aunt Margaret, too. She isn't my truly aunt, you know; she's mamma's old friend that she hasn't seen since they went to school. She's just come to-night, and she's so lovely; I do love her so much. And mamma says I must be as good to her as I can, for her husband and her little boy are in Paradise. We never saw them, but if you should go there, as you say, Mr. Richmond, you will remember everything, and you can tell them all about us. My papa is there, too. I expect you will all be friends together." She smiled at him, and he stroked her hair with his feeble hand, — that soft, fair hair; it always reminded him of his lost wife.

Rosa was silent for a moment, but her little tongue was never still for very long. "Aunt Margaret has brought you a present — nice things, I expect, for mamma told her all about you, and that you were a soldier. She says she loves soldiers, for her husband was one, and to-morrow she is coming to see you in your house, and I am coming with her."

"She is very kind," said Richmond; but his thoughts had drifted away, and the child, divining his abstraction, presently ran off to join her mother.

Richmond sat quite still; the shadows deepened and the moonlight flooded the landscape with a silver radiance. Far off a whippoorwill reiterated his melancholy chant. Unobserved by Richmond, two persons had sauntered down the lawn until now they paused in the shadow of the hedge, a short distance from the silent figure under the apple tree. At first they did not attract his attention, but presently Peyton, for it was he, raised his voice in speaking to his companion.

"I have waited, Margaret," he said passionately, "I have waited for years! I loved you before you ever saw him. I tell you, you are throwing away your life and mine for a dream — a fancy."

"Edward," his companion replied, and her low, clear tones were distinctly audible in the silence. "Edward, I believe him

to be alive. I have told you that he never was proved dead — only missing. Do you suppose that I am like Enoch Arden's wife? No; I would wait for him forever. Every day I listen for his step upon the stair. When I stood by my child's grave at Charlottesville last spring, I felt until the very last that he would come back to comfort me. I see him constantly in my dreams, always entreating me to come to him, to follow him. Only last night he seemed to stand by my bed. I rose in my sleep to follow him, and awoke standing with outstretched arms, calling 'Rex! Rex!'"

As she spoke, unconsciously raising her voice as she repeated the name, the figure hidden under the apple tree in the shadow of the hedge rose and took a step or two forward.

"Margaret, Margaret," he cried, staggering out into the moonlight. Before Peyton, transfixed with amazement, could make a movement, his companion, with a cry of recognition, had flung herself into her husband's outstretched arms. "Rex, Rex!" she sobbed, "I knew that I should find you!"

On the moonlight-flooded lawn, two figures etched against the black hedge stood tranced in an embrace like that of eternal marble; while out in the shadowy path another figure, with bent head and clenched hands, strode slowly away — alone.

# Denny.

BY LANDIS MILLS.

THE incident was told to me years back, when I was second assistant engineer with the Golden Crown Mining Company at Red Dog. At the time it raised by several notches, in my opinion, those rough miners with whom I was so constantly associated; and in later years I have often recalled it when the course of events has brought me face to face with the hypocrisy of a large city.

It was told me the eve before St. Patrick's Day, for I remember having started for a ball given by the Irish element. The night was clear and cold, but the wind was so sharp that I was chilled through, and stopped at the Traveler's Rest for a warming glass of stimulant.

I pushed open the door — the old bullet-scarred door with its heavy hinges — and entered the bar-room. The usual crowd was not in evidence, and of the five occupants, four were in the act of taking their departure. They carried their shovels with them, and as they passed me and went out on the windy street they wished me a good evening. The door closed behind them and I was left alone with Parson Sam.

I walked to the big stove, and while warming my hands asked if the boys were going to work that night.

Sam pulled at his pipe, and replied, "No."

I remarked the fact that they had their shovels with them, and asked for what use they were intended. Sam took the pipe from his mouth, expectorated in the direction of the base of the bar, and replied: "Goin' to give Denny an airin'."

"And what is the matter with Denny? and where is he?" I asked.

"Nothin' at present," he replied; "he's in the cemetery on the hill."

"Dead?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"And who was Denny?"

A look of surprise came over his face as he asked, "You haven't heard of Denny, Mr. Hopkins?" and then after a moment's pause he added, "Well, maybe that ain't so strange, after all. You've only been in Red Dog some six or eight months, and Denny died just five years ago, comin' to-morrow."

"And why do they remember him so well now?" I asked.

Sam removed his arm from the back of his chair, rested his elbows on his knees, and gazing through the open door of the stove at the flickering flames, told me the story of Denny.

"You see, Denny was sorter mild like, awfully gentle and quiet spoken, you know, so the boys didn't pay much attention to him, 'cept when they were in bad humor, and wanted some one to take it out on. He took it all in a quiet, good-natured sort of way, never thinkin' of hittin' back, so we all thought he didn't have no sand. At least that's what we thought until that St. Patrick's Day about which I'm tellin' you.

"There was a good deal of drinkin' goin' on the night before, and four patriotic Irishmen kept it up until they were regular blind. They were a sorry lot when they showed up for work the next day, and the boss gave them a regular raking down.

"That mornin' was the first time I ever saw Denny show any temper. He was mad clear through at the thought of workin' on St. Patrick's Day, and refused to take his pick out of the tool shed. When the boss comes up to him and asks what's the matter, Denny just points to the green ribbon pinned on the front of his shirt, and says, 'It's St. Patrick's Day, and I don't work.'

"Any other man would have been given his walkin' papers as quick as shootin', but, somehow or other, the boss always made an allowance for Denny.

"'But we can't stop work, Denny,' he says.

"Denny stood sort of stubborn-like, and replied, 'Well, you oughter have some sort of celebration, or, at least, run up a green flag over the office.'

"The boss was for humorin' him, and says: 'And we are goin' to celebrate. At ten o'clock we be a-goin' to fire off a blast, in

honor of old St. Pat, that will blow all the snakes out of Ireland.'"

"'At ten?' says Denny.

"'Yes, at ten,' replies the boss.

"That sort of satisfied him. Without another word he grabbed his pick, and went after the boys, a-singin' some Irish song.

"The boss wasn't jokin', for just about the time he said, he called for all hands to quit work, and the engineer came in, and placed the dynamite cartridge and the machine for settin' it off.

"We all got at a safe distance, and stood there awaitin' the explosion. Denny was almost beside himself with delight, and steppin' out a little in advance, he called out for his pal, Jim, to join him and see the snakes come wrigglin' out of the shaft. But Jim didn't answer, for he wasn't there.

"The engineer, who was a-holdin' his watch, seein' that things went off on time, turned round when he heard this, and got awful white. It didn't take no time for us to find we were four shy, and them four the ones that had been so drunk the night before. Not a man spoke, 'cept the engineer, and he just said, 'My God!' We all knew them fellows were still in the mine.

"Then it was that Denny made the sixty of us out to be cowards, and him a hero. Without a word, he ducked his head a'tween his shoulders and set off for the shaft as fast as his legs could carry him, the green ribbon a-flutterin' over his shoulder.

"One or two of us made a move as if to foller him, but the engineer threw out his arm to stop us, and his voice sounded mighty strange when he yelled, 'It's death — forty seconds.'

"We all knew then that the cartridge would go off in forty seconds, and that we had seen the last of Denny. It sort of paralyzed the boys, and they just stood round like so many statues. To me it seemed as if there was somethin' closin' in on all sides of me — a sort of interferin' with my breathin' — and for the life of me I couldn't take my eyes off the engineer, as he stood there holdin' his watch. He was as white as a piece o' paper, and the sweat was runnin' down his face just like it was midsummer.

"Forty seconds ain't much, Mr. Hopkins, but it seemed like a year to me. I was just beginnin' to think that maybe Denny had got there in time after all, when the engineer let go his watch,